

Stakeholder Input on the updated Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

During October and November 2015, Water Use and Efficiency staff presented at seventeen workshops for outreach on the MWELO. Fourteen were organized by DWR with assistance from local agencies, two were organized by the Bay Friendly Landscaping Coalition and one was organized by the American Construction Inspectors Association (ACIA). The workshops organized for local agencies were intended primarily for local agency staff to become familiar with the MWELO requirements; however landscape professionals and other stakeholders were welcome and attended all workshops. The two workshops held by the Bay Friendly Landscaping Coalition were primarily focused on landscape industry stakeholders. The workshops were held in small (Sonora, Arcata), medium (Oxnard, Manteca) and large communities (Bakersfield, Moreno Valley). Attendance varied, but was estimated at 25-50 in most locations.

Audience: mostly local agency staff, some landscape industry and others (water suppliers, master gardeners). In addition, the comments below include suggestions from stakeholders communicating directly to DWR staff outside of a workshop setting.

- Education materials and workshops for home buyers and developers
 - Local agencies need information to hand out explaining the requirements and the reasoning behind the requirements.
 - They recommend that new home buyers receive a booklet that includes landscape information.
 - Developers and other applicants need guidance before they come to the plan counter with a development application
- A comprehensive guidance document for local agencies.
 - Local agency staff need guidance information for their own departments to refer to
 - Planning, building, public works, parks, city arborist, water supplier
- Require that maintenance agreements stipulate that the landscape retrofits will comply with MWELO
- Trees and vegetated stormwater retention areas (irrigated by separate hydrozones) should be considered Special Landscape Areas (SLA) with a higher allowable water budgets
- Agency staff and applicants find the different applicability thresholds for review, sub-metering, etc. confusing
- Agency staff and applicants find the different water budgets for residential and non-residential confusing without clear explanation in the regulation text
- Existing landscapes (493). This section has been problematic since the before the 2009 update. Section 493 and 493.1 were rewritten in 2009 to bridge the gap that exists when a local agency is not also a water supplier and have no staff or experience in monitoring water use. Section 493 reminds local agencies that they may enlist the assistance of water suppliers for monitoring

landscape water use; however this is not mandatory to either party. Local agencies are concerned they will in some way be penalized for not complying with this section.

- Redefine some terms to be consistent with building codes, plumbing codes, etc. With the Cal Green update in June 2015, building officials are now looking for compliance in landscape projects. Because some terms are not consistent with recognized terms in found in Title 24 and other codes, there is some confusion on intent and applicability.
 - “New construction”
 - “Residential”
 - High rise multi-family
 - Single Family
 - Grading and “Mass Grading”-scope and permitted practice
- Compost incorporation conflicts with tree protection zones and other established plants
- Re-examine how pools fit into the applicability and water budget of a residential landscape
- Stakeholders have asked for additional clarity on Appendix D, such as “are the irrigation requirements in the regular pathway transferable to App. D?”
- Commissioning was brought up by a commissioning agent who is a member of the ACIA. Many stakeholders state that there is a large disconnect in communication between designers, installer, maintenance staff and facility staff. Over time plans are lost, irrigation equipment is modified and irrigation schedules are changed with no regard for the original specifications. Commissioning irrigation systems will ensure the systems are operating correctly, the plants are planted correctly, the schedule is correct. All of this is documented in a commissioning log and is available for future reference.